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sending a message to a customer offering a product or service for sale, the message comprising locations for response by the customer indicating his intention to order the product or service,

receiving from the customer a message that includes the response, and,

based on the received message, automatically generating order information in a format usable automatically by an order fulfillment system to cause the order to be filled,

the message and the received message being entirely email-based.

5 6. (Twice amended) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction,

automatically identifying response information which requires resolution of an issue with the source of the message, and

automatically managing a message dialog with the source to resolve the issue[.], wherein the message and the message dialog are entirely email-based.

6 7. (Amended) The method of claim 6 in which at least some of the dialog is performed automatically.

7 8. (Twice amended) Software guided interactive message dialogs to resolve, on behalf of a vendor, customer issues that occur in direct response messages that are automatically identified as requiring a dialog,the direct response messages and the dialogs being entirely email-based.

8 9. (Amended) A machine-based method comprising

automatically sorting messages, based on response information contained in the messages, into messages that can be processed automatically to generate commercial transactions, messages in which the response information is inadequate to permit generation of commercial transactions, and messages that may be subjected to exception handling to yield information that is sufficient to generate commercial transactions,

the messages being entirely email based.

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10. (Twice amended) A machine-based method comprising:

analyzing a message to derive response information concerning a commercial transaction, and, in response to the message,

automatically generating a confirmatory message to the source of the message confirming that the commercial transaction has been or will be completed,

the message and the confirmatory message being entirely email based.

11. (Twice amended) A machine-based method comprising:

receiving inbound messages associated with a marketing program, the inbound messages containing response information and outbound messages from which the inbound messages result being associated with a distinct piece of the marketing program, and

automatically associating the response information in each of the inbound messages with the corresponding distinct piece of the marketing program.

the inbound and outbound messages being entirely email-based.

14. (Amended) A machine-based method comprising

sending outbound messages associated with commercial transactions,

storing information related to each of the outbound messages in a database, the information being useful for completing the commercial transactions, the information not being contained in the outbound messages,

analyzing inbound messages that result from the outbound messages and that contain response information useful in completing the commercial transactions, and

automatically merging the response information with corresponding information in the database for use in completing the transactions,

the outbound and inbound messages being entirely emailed-based.

15. (Amended) A machine-based method comprising

sending outbound messages associated with commercial transactions,

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storing information related to each of the outbound messages in a database, the information being useful for completing the commercial transactions, the information not being contained in the outbound messages,

analyzing inbound messages that result from the outbound messages and that contain response information useful in completing the commercial transactions,

identifying inbound messages that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using the database information to assist in exception handling of the identified inbound messages,

the inbound and outbound messages being entirely email based.

Please add the following new claims:

17. The method of claim 4 in which the step of sending the message to the customer includes sending a template.

18. The method of claim 4 in which the step of sending the message to the customer includes providing in-line HTML code within the message.

19. The method of claim 4 also including incorporating information from a pre-existing customer account into the order information.

20. The method of claim 4 also including monitoring the sending and receiving of messages using a web-based interface.

21. The method of claim 4, also including:

identifying the received message as a message that cannot be processed automatically to generate order information; and

using information stored in a database to assist in exception handling of the identified message.

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22. The method of claim 1 in which the message also includes in-line HTML code.

23. The method of claim 1 also including incorporating information from a pre-existing customer account into the commercial transaction data.

24. The method of claim 1 in which the message sent to a customer is created using a message creation tool.

25. The method of claim 1 in which the message is a member of a set of related messages.

26. The method of claim 1 including viewing information about the messages using a web-based interface.

27. The method of claim 5 in which the commercial transaction includes an order for a product or service.

28. The method of claim 5 in which the message includes in-line HTML code.

29. The method of claim 5 in which the message includes at least part of a message sent to a customer and responses of the customer to the message.

30. The method of claim 9 in which the commercial transaction includes an order for a product or service.

31. The method of claim 9 in which the message includes at least part of a message sent to a customer and responses of the customer to the message.

32. The method of claim 9 in which the message includes in-line HTML code.

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32 33. The method of claim 10 in which the message includes information from a template.

33 34. The method of claim 11 in which the outbound messages are created with a message creation tool.

34 35. The method of claim 11 also including viewing information about the inbound and outbound messages using a web-based interface.

35 36. The method of claim 11 also including identifying inbound messages that cannot be processed automatically to generate the commercial transactions, and

using information from a database to assist in exception handling of the identified inbound messages.

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